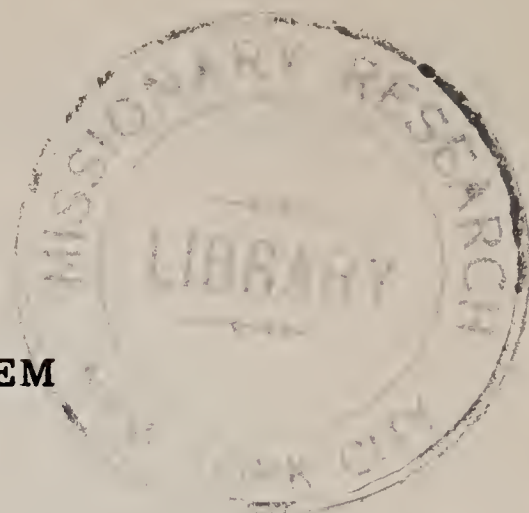


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Church World Service

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THE CHURCH
AND
THE WORLD REFUGEE PROBLEM



A brief summary of the refugee needs in the Far East, the Middle East, and Europe, prepared by the Promotion Department of Church World Service, 214 East 21st Street, New York 10, N.Y.

"The existing situation is a challenge to the conscience of the world. In particular, it constitutes a continuing claim on the Christian Church whose obligations to peoples in deep distress are inherent in her faith and teaching."

-- Dr. Henry Carter of London,
Chairman of the Standing Committee
on Refugees of the World Council
of Churches.

June 12, 1950

NOTE: - One significant point in the new Displaced Persons Bill is that it provides for the admission of 54,000 German "expellees".

I. -- REFUGEE NEEDS IN THE FAR EAST

I thank you very sincerely and tell you that when partition took place we went through great misery and hardship, but it was the Christian churches and institutions that stood by us.

They had to look after the refugees.

They provided the comfort for them, doing all they could, and we can never be too grateful and thankful.

Our problems are still gigantic and we believe in helping ourselves, and we hope you will help us to help ourselves. -- From remarks made to the staff of Church World Service by the wife (The Begum) of the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

8,000,000 REFUGEES
IN PAKISTAN TODAY

According to a statement from Karachi, Pakistan, printed in the New York Times within the past month:

"Unless aid is swiftly provided for Pakistan's more than 8,000,000 refugees a terrible human disaster may be shaping up."

Cable from Dr. Donald F. Ebright
Director of India Relief Committee
(April 18, 1950)

BENGAL CONDITION APPALLING. RUSH MILK POWDER, VITAMIN TABLETS,
COTTON CLOTHS.

NEW MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES

The following paragraph is taken from a letter received June 1, 1950, from Dr. J. C. Manry, Chairman of the Christian Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation in West Pakistan:

"For weeks past, ever since the February riots in East and West Bengal, there has been a new movement of refugees across the deserts of Rajputana, into the Province of Sind, West Pakistan. Mrs. Richardson has visited the border where 150,000 of these miserable people have straggled in within recent weeks, and has done some work on milk distribution, shoes and clothing. Light weight clothing, shoes, powdered milk, multivitamin tablets, are specially needed there. Miss Rose M. Winter, Secretary of the Y.W.C.A., Bunder Road, Karachi, has organized sewing circles and children's milk bars in the Raji Refugee Camp, Karachi, for us. If it is possible for you to send at once a good shipment of these things for the refugees in Sind, it will be greatly appreciated, and will do much good. This is a very hot country, and no warm clothing should be sent. (The desert gets cold, of course, in the winter, but I am not speaking of then.)"

DETAILED REPORT ON REFUGEES

BURMA -- is one of the neediest of countries. Rangoon is a city of refugees. The country is torn by civil strife and the people are suffering many privations. Drugs are particularly needed.

CHINA -- nobody knows the exact number of refugees here, but it is estimated in the millions. Child welfare service of CWS continues to increase in importance. Relief supplies will be exhausted by mid-year unless new shipments can be made. There is now hope that CWS will soon be able to get new supplies into China.

INDIA -- refugees are moving in both directions across the border between East Bengal, Pakistan and West Bengal, India. In West Bengal there are one million refugees.

KOREA -- with one-fourth of the population composed of refugees, it will be a long time before Korea is off the list of countries needing aid.

PAKISTAN -- is one of the greatest refugee areas. See first two statements of this document.

II. -- REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Palestine Refugees

The most recent figure of Palestine refugees is 820,000. The great majority of them are Moslems but there are also many faithful members of both the Orthodox and

Evangelical Churches. There is great human need and a great challenge to evangelization by deeds. The situation is a complex one and needs vary from area to area. The needs for clothing, bedcovers and funds for educational programmes are, however, paramount and almost limitless. It would seem a bounden duty of the churches to give all possible help in these particular directions and to give it with urgent immediacy.

Christian Arabs

Neither the termination of the British mandate nor the decision of the United Nations that Palestine should be partitioned between Jew and Arab brought peace to that distracted land. Our concern is with the sorrowful fact that from the conflict-areas an immense number of Arabs fled - the lowest estimate considerably exceeds half a million. Despite one year's grant-in-aid by the United Nations, many died from hunger and typhus; but for that aid starvation and disease would have become rampant. Now in the second year of their exile they are in dire need of the bare necessities of life - shelter, milk, vitamin foods, blankets, suitable clothing, medical supplies, tools for craftsmen. Large numbers are encamped around Gaza. Others have found temporary refuge in the neighboring Arab States of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. Thousands of Christian Arabs have sought refuge in Bethlehem, the one Christian municipality in Palestine. How many of the refugees will be able to return to Israeli territory is still an unanswered question. It seems probable that resettlement in Arab countries will be essential for the majority.

Footnote -- At an American Council of Voluntary Agencies' luncheon with Mrs. Penrose, wife of the President of the American University in Beirut, she expressed herself in the highest terms regarding the packing, condition and quality of clothing shipped by us for distribution among the Palestinian refugees.

Mrs. Penrose gives most of her time in service to the refugees, distributing relief materials and in other ways assisting the various relief agencies. She brought to me personal greetings and expressions of appreciation from the members of our Committee in that area and expressed herself in terms that I know will be pleasing to you, namely, "The bales from Church World Service are wonderful, the best we receive. Whenever we want to be sure that we will have particularly good materials to distribute, we always open a CWS bale." - Wayland Zwayer, Director Overseas Department, Church World Service.

III. -- REFUGEE PROBLEM IN EUROPE

Frankfurt, May 29 (AP) -- West Germany's 9,000,000 restless refugees are staying out of the moderate parties. The refugees want their own parties, and are turning to the Right.

The critical test will come in the Schleswig - Holstein election. Over 40 per cent of the population there are homeless, disgruntled refugees.

Unemployment is high.

Housing is short.

Doris's extremist group is one of the chief contenders for the Schleswig - Holstein refugee vote.

A refugee party headed by former S. S. Major Waldemar Kraft is also expected to garner a big slice of the refugee vote.

Who Are the German Refugees?

"The German refugees are individuals, alone or in family groups, forcibly expelled from the pockets of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia. They are also ex-prisoners of war wandering aimlessly because their homeland has been given away. They are other uprooted millions from those sliced-off territories milling about uncertainly. In aggregate, these human beings are a disinherited horde seeking continuance of life in conquered Germany. For these refugees homes and hope must be found within Germany." -- From THE PROBLEM OF 12,000,000 GERMAN REFUGEES IN TODAY'S GERMANY, by Betty Barton.

The Dominating Social Problem of Europe Today

The dominating social problem of European life today is the problem of the refugees.

There are still several hundred thousand men, women and children who are known technically as Displaced Persons; but behind them, without the benefit of inter-governmental legal protection and assistance, are millions of people who have lost their own homes, and often their countries, and who will never find them again.

It is important not to isolate this problem as if it had nothing to do with the life of the Church. In itself, it constitutes the most urgent aspect of inter-church aid in Europe today.

We approach the refugees not as masses of unidentified people, but as our fellow-Christians deeply rooted in the life of their Churches. -- From the 1950 PROGRAM FOR EUROPE, Dept. of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, World Council of Churches.

German Refugees

NOTE: - The following statement is from the Department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, World Council of Churches.

No less than 10,000,000 German nationals were expelled under the Potsdam agreement from areas not now within the provisional boundaries of Germany. There are 1,800,000 of these refugees plus 1,700,000 Volksdeutsche in the U.S. Zone; 3,500,000 refugees plus 900,000 Volksdeutsche refugees in the British Zone; 200,000 refugees in the French Zone, and about 4,500,000 in the Soviet Zone of Germany and in Berlin.

The problem is complicated by the influx of infiltrates from the Soviet Zone to the three western zones. It is estimated that about 1,000,000 infiltrates are living in the western zones and their numbers increase by 1,500 per day. The major burden lies with the German economy and the German churches.

The World Council of Churches convened the Hamburg Conference in order to draw the world's attention to the problem of German refugees and is trying to secure help on an international basis. In particular, the World Council supports centers of self-help for the German refugees in connection with the other activities of the Department of Inter-Church Aid and the Youth Department (help for refugee students; House of Helping Hands, Beienrode; youth hostels; reception camps, etc.). This is Europe's major problem of rehabilitation and assimilation. Governmental action is essential in taking far-reaching economic and social measures. Church-directed action in this field must include:-

- (i) spiritual rehabilitation and integration.
- (ii) material relief and welfare in sub-standard camps.
- (iii) care of apprentice youth.
- (iv) vocational training.
- (v) world-wide publicity.

Greece

Except for the guerrilla and bandit activities of some 1,500 Andartes and the ever-present fear of renewed invasion from the North, the Greek war has ended. The 780,000 refugees are now only 350,000, the others having returned to their villages to rebuild and to replant. In Northern areas there have been no crops for from one to three years, and there will be nothing in the villages for sustenance. Though it would be materially easier to support the people in refugee concentrations, the people desire to get back and to get started with their building and their planting. This means that seeds and sustenance must be carried in. Greek churches are making remarkable efforts to care for these refugees and homeless countrymen.

Emphases for 1950:

- (i) Relief and rehabilitation of the homeless.
- (ii) Assistance (food, clothing and funds) for 1,300 refugee clergy, plus other needy religious leaders.
- (iii) Emergency aid and equipment for the Church's spiritual ministry, sacraments and worship.

- (iv) Equipment and support for emergency training in provisional quarters and for expansion and establishment of permanent training centers for laity, women, youth and clergy.
- (v) Funds for printing of religious literature, hymnals and youth publications.
- (vi) Funds for token assistance for rebuilding sanctuaries, institutions, and training centers.
- (vii) Aid in form of medicaments, and funds for the establishment of recuperation centers.
- (viii) International contacts and assistance with rehabilitation of prisoners, homeless youth, young soldiers and orphans.

Conclusion

Refugee needs, as indicated in this brief review, are pressing hard upon the Christian conscience. Here is a world problem which demands our immediate attention. We may center our concern on the Far East, the Middle East, or Europe -- the needs are in each area still waiting for our concern to be transferred into Christian action.

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